

Mary Knepper Welcomed as Alumni Director

The Nursing Alumni Association is pleased to welcome Mary Knepper, who brings a wealth of experience in fund and donor development to the position of alumni director.

Mary was grants manager at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center for 12 years where she helped secure \$28 million through more than 200 awarded grants, and worked with the College of Nursing's faculty and staff on many projects including tuition assistance, simulation equipment and facility improvements. Her expertise was included in Jana Hexter's 2012 book, "Grant Writing Revealed – 25 Experts Share Their Art, Science, and Secrets."

Prior to St. Joseph's, she initiated successful revenue campaigns as director of marketing and public



relations for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra and the Spokane (WA) Symphony Orchestra. Mary holds a BA in music education and has completed advanced training programs in grantsmanship.

"I'm very excited to be on board with the terrific team at Upstate," she commented. "I have a tremendous amount of respect for nurses – your work is so important to the future of health care! I'm impressed with the members of the alumni association board and their commitment to service; they set a great example. I look forward to getting to know our alumni, faculty and students, and

working with the association to create new ways to engage with graduates of all generations."

College of Nursing's Ongoing Technology Initiatives DNP FULLY ONLINE AND BSN TO FOLLOW

The Institute of Medicine "Future of Nursing" report (2011) has been shown to be "the most important document in the history of nursing," commented Upstate College of Nursing Dean Joyce Griffin-Sobel, PhD, RN. "Calling for the removal of barriers to practice, which would allow nurses to practice to the full extent of their education, and for 80 percent of the nursing workforce to be baccalaureate prepared by 2020 has led to major legislative and educational initiatives since its publication. A renewed call for meaningful interprofessional education is spurred on by the

increased demand for patient safety improvements."

The report also describes the opportunity to transform practice through the use of technology. The major nursing organizations that accredit colleges of nursing have revised their standards to include expectations of academic progression pathways for nurses and interprofessional initiatives in teamwork. Upstate's College of Nursing is engaging in new initiatives utilizing technology to its maximum, according to Dr. Griffin-Sobel.

continued on page 2

HAVE YOU PRESENTED, BEEN PROMOTED OR PUBLISHED?

Share your professional and personal milestones in our Alumni Class Notes!
Send your news c/o Nursing In Touch to: hickeyl@upstate.edu.

The SUNY Upstate Medical University Nursing Alumni Association publishes *Nursing In Touch* quarterly. Distribution is free to College alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends.

Alumni Director:

Mary Knepper

Writer: Lois Hickey

Design: Marketing & University Communications

Board of Directors**President:**

Barbara Kane, BS '98/MS '99

Vice President:

Archie McEvers, AAS '74/BS '95/
MS '97

Treasurer:

Ellen Crehan, MS/NP '02

Secretary:

Gayle Bero, BS '99/MS '02

Michael Allain, RN/MS '09

Dorothy Champney, FNP '02

Denise Dann, MS '02

Lorna Forbes, RN/FNP '10

Polly Gorman, MS/NP '98

Florence Mandebvu, RN/MSN '11

Bonnie Miner, BS '94/MS'96/
PMAC '02

Teresa Tomeny, BS '00/MS'06

Ex-Officio Members:

Gregory L. Eastwood, MD,
Interim President,

Upstate Medical University
Joyce Griffin-Sobel, PhD, Dean,
College of Nursing

Eileen Pezzi, MPA, Vice

President for Development
Julie White, PhD, Dean,
Student Affairs

Address Corrections to:

Nursing Alumni Office
Upstate Medical University
750 E. Adams Street – CAB 326
Syracuse, NY 13210
315-464-4416

Connect with Each Other!

Join College Online
Community at:

www.foundationforupstate.org/nursingalumni

COLLEGE NEWS (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Technology Initiatives Transform Practice

"We have a fully online Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, which began in September 2013. It is the University's first fully online degree," said Dr. Griffin-Sobel. The program is for nurses who have a master's degree as a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist, and the college is planning on initiating a DNP program for nurses with a bachelor's degree in the next year.

"A DNP degree is the highest level of preparation for an advanced practice nurse and is essential for the complex healthcare of today," Dr. Griffin-Sobel said.

In addition, the RN to BSN program is turning into an online program. Surveys of nurses and health care systems in the central and upstate NY areas have informed the college that an online RN-BSN track is "the #1 need." Approximately 80 percent of nurses with an associate's degree do not move beyond a BSN, the dean noted.



Dean of the College of Nursing,
Joyce Griffin-Sobel, PhD, RN

"Even without the Affordable Care Act, the need for nurses with advanced education

has dramatically grown because of the knowledge and skills required by our complex health care system."

Upstate's nurse educators are greatly increasing efforts in online education and teaching with technology as well. Teaching strategies need to evolve, just as curricula do, according to the dean.

"Techniques such as simulation, use of smartphones and mobile devices, and distance learning are effective ways to convey difficult concepts to students, and allow nurses to have evidence-based information at the bedside where it is needed. Students learn when they are ready to learn, not when we are ready to teach them. We must make nursing education accessible."

New Associate Dean Feels "Right at Home"

This past July, Dr. Pamela Y. Mahon joined the Upstate community as associate dean of the College of Nursing, working alongside Dean Joyce Griffin-Sobel, PhD, RN.

"Frankly, I feel right at home because my BS in nursing was from SUNY Downstate," Dr. Mahon commented. "I'm delighted to be a part of Upstate and serving the communities of central NY."

Dr. Mahon earned both her MA and PhD from NYU where she explored constructs underlying patient satisfaction. Her 35 years in nursing have been in the public sector, first at the VA, where she advanced from staff nurse to assistant chief nurse. Serving as the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation Director of Nursing for Special Projects, Dr. Mahon was corporate project director for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Pew Charitable Trusts' Strengthening Hospital Nursing Program, as well as the NYS Health Workforce Retraining Initiative.

Dr. Mahon then joined the faculty at Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) and transitioned to Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing at Hunter College/CUNY. She served

as principal investigator for the federal HRSA nursing workforce grants, bringing in approximately \$2.25 million to help promote equity in health delivery through the education and training of a more diverse nursing workforce.

At Hunter, she also worked with Dr. Griffin-Sobel to launch interprofessional education programs, as well as to develop tech-savvy faculty across CUNY nursing schools.

In 2012, Dr. Mahon was inducted as a fellow in the NLN's American Academy of Education. She is a certified nurse educator and nurse executive.



Pamela Young Mahon, PhD,
RN, NEA-BC, CNE, ANEF

Education, Hard Work Enriches Alum's Career

Teresa Tomeny is not afraid of hard work or challenges.

While working in maternal child nursing, she returned to study for her BSN from Upstate and started teaching part-time at St. Joseph's School of Nursing.

Although furthering her education was a challenge, she observes: "It was a challenge which many students are facing today. The good news is, it is possible with sacrifice and hard work!"

Once she completed her MSN as a clinical nurse specialist with a minor in education at Upstate, she chose to move to a full-time faculty position at a community college. After three years, she decided to return to bedside nursing in hematology/oncology at University Hospital. A year later, Teresa was selected for a CNS opening. "I worked as a CNS in quality and patient safety for the next two years. I learned so much – it was a very valuable experience!"



Teresa Tomeny, RN, BS '00,
MS/CNS '06

Today a nursing case manager at UH, her work is a culmination of all her past experiences and education.

"I'm a float case manager which allows me to work in all different areas of the hospital, from pediatrics to the adult ICU. I am able to interact with patients, families, nurses, doctors and all the disciplines involved in each patient's care. Communication can be challenging at times, but I keep the focus always on the goals of care."

Teresa is not only active with her church, but also volunteers on the Nursing Alumni Association Board of Directors. "I give back in order to support the College of Nursing to help ensure the quality education students receive," she commented.

She continues to recognize the value of the college's programs in her career: "I plan to return to school in the spring to obtain my certification in nursing case management."

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Nurse Travels to Nicaragua as Part of Upstate Team

A dedicated nurse and FNP student, Joanne Speicher traveled last summer with five other Upstate students to El Sauce, Nicaragua, to assist with and learn different medical procedures. The trip was organized by Upstate's Center for Civic Engagement with the not-for-profit Enlace Project in Nicaragua.

"It was an enjoyable privilege to be a part of a team from Upstate to visit the quiet community of El Sauce in Nicaragua," Joanne said. "Our group was introduced to the health care system by actively participating in clinics at rural countryside health posts. We performed respiratory assessments, blood pressure checks and did numerous pap smears. In this environment, the frustration but also the ingenuity of the doctors was evident when they



Joanne Speicher, RN, FNP '14 (left), with
respiratory therapy student Adlin Noel
and medical student Rachael Kuch.

creatively met the health and medication needs of their patients."

For one week prior to joining the Upstate team, Joanne also participated in lunch clinics in Puerto Cabezas, feeding the area's poorest children (500 at a time) and setting up micro-financing projects there. Her experiences in Nicaragua inspired her, personally and professionally.

"I would love to return with a grant to help further Enlace's work in El Sauce, and elsewhere!" Joanne got her wish. The Upstate program is sending her to Central America again this February - this time to El Salvador.

Joanne received the Federal Traineeship Award, was inducted into the Omicron Alpha Chapter of STTI, and is an Upstate Student Ambassador.

**SEE THE COLLEGE OF NURSING'S WEBSITE FOR
CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT
WWW.UPSTATE.EDU/CON**

SUNY Upstate Medical University
326 Campus Activities Building
750 East Adams Street
Syracuse, New York 13210

www.foundationforupstate.org/nursingalumni

Let Your Gift Do Twice the Good!

Your gift to the alumni annual fund
can be doubled through
the Foundation's
Matching Gift Program!

Make your gift today at

www.foundationforupstate.org/nursingalumni
or call 315-464-4416

ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

Roberta Rolland, RN, MS, FNP, BS '03, recently presented at the Sigma Theta Tau International Convention in Indianapolis on the personal transition of ER nurses when patient care changes from curative to end-of-life.

Joyce Scarpinato, DNP, PNP, FNP '09, nursing assistant professor at Upstate, discussed her research on the impact the electronic health record is having on patients and providers – implications for assessment, diagnosis, treatment and ethical issues – at a Bioethics and Humanities Center Seminar held November 1 on campus.

Susan Shaffer, RN, ANP '05, has been named nurse liaison/screener for the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Upstate University Hospital. She serves as the department's nurse liaison between external facilities and the Upstate University Acute Rehabilitation units at the downtown and Community campuses, and will screen patients and facilitate the admission and transfer process of patients to the two units.

Upstate to Aid Carthage Area Hospital with Stroke Care

Carthage Area Hospital will be aided in its treatment of stroke patients by neurologists at Upstate University Hospital through a special telemedicine program. The telemedicine platform created by REACH Health will provide Upstate neurologists with an array of information, including CT scans, as well as the ability to speak with doctors and the patient.

"The ability to help outlying hospitals enhance their care of stroke patients through this innovative telemedicine program speaks to Upstate's value as a regional resource," said alumna Rochele Clark, RN, BSN '05, stroke coordinator at Upstate. "We have experts here that certain regions of the state do not, but thanks to telemedicine, our experts can be in hospitals throughout the region in a touch of a button."

Clark reminds us, "Time is brain when it comes to stroke treatment, so this telemedicine approach to delivering stroke care makes perfect sense. Upstate is about 90 miles south of Carthage, but we can be in that hospital emergency room within minutes to consult with their physician on the best stroke care for their patients."

Upstate has a similar long-distance stroke protocol in place with Rome Memorial Hospital, located in Rome, NY.

